

Boys Like You by imagineyou (jokerindisguise), jokerindisguise

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Summary:

You're sure Steve Harrington will never notice you. Billy Hargrove sets out to prove you wrong.

1. Boys Like You

Author's Note:

Inspired by the song [Boys Like You](#) by Kids at Midnight. This is my first Steve Harrington fic, so I'm a bit nervous about this. If you like this, then letting me know would make my day.

"Harrington again? Really, Y/N?"

"Shut up," you muttered, clutching your journal closer to your chest.

Billy shot you an unimpressed look before glancing pointedly at the journal. Or maybe he was looking at your chest. With Billy, it was always a little hard to tell.

"He's never going to stop sniffing after Wheeler," Billy pointed out as he dropped down into the seat beside you. "So, you should probably stop pining away for him in your little diary."

"Shut up," you repeated, shooting him a glare before you turned to drop your journal into your backpack.

"I'm just saying," Billy started as he leaned closer to you. "I wouldn't mind helping you get over your broken heart."

You quirked an eyebrow at him, unaffected by his attempt at a come-on. "Just get your textbook out. We've got work to do," you reminded him as you flipped open your math notebook.

You weren't really thrilled when Mrs. Green asked you to tutor Billy Hargrove. It wasn't even because you knew he was a shameless flirt and would attempt to get in your pants at every turn. It was because he was truly apathetic about the subject and you knew you would have your work cut out for you.

After the first few sessions, you were more than a little surprised to realize that you were *bonding* with Billy. He always came off as a smart-ass who couldn't give less of a damn about school or anyone in it. It didn't take you many after-school tutoring lessons with him to

realize that it was mostly just a facade. He acted tough and gave everyone shit, but there was something else going on with him. You just weren't quite sure what it was yet.

When he caught you watching Steve and Nancy do their little heartbroken dance around each other, you were more than a bit worried that he would use your pathetic crush against you.

Instead, he scoffed and shook his head before slinging his arm around your shoulders to steer you away from the former couple. "You can do better than Princess Steve, Y/N."

"What?" You were shocked by his words. He almost sounded like he *cared*.

"Harrington has his nose stuck so far up Wheeler's ass," Billy continued with a roll of his eyes. "You deserve someone who's going to give you every ounce of their attention," he purred, a smirk forming on his face.

"And there it is," you muttered before shaking off his arm from around your shoulders. "You're shameless," you told him before you walked away from him, ignoring the sound of his laugh as it followed you down the hallway.

Now, Billy was considering you with an expression on his face that nearly had you concerned.

"Okay," he drawled before he nodded his head.

"Okay?" You couldn't help but wonder what he meant.

"Okay," he confirmed before he opened his textbook and began to idly flip through the pages.

"Okay?" You repeated, worry leaking through in your tone.

His pleased smirk did nothing to reassure you about his intentions.

You really should have known that he would find a way to fuck you over, though. It didn't happen until your third period math class the next day. Billy had taken to sitting in the seat next to yours. He

claimed it was because he wanted to copy your work, but you couldn't help but start to suspect that Billy might actually think of you as a friend.

You were waiting for him to drop down into the seat next to yours, but instead you noticed he took Steve's usual seat near the front.

"Billy," you hissed in an attempt to get his attention.

Billy glanced at you over his shoulder before sending you a wink. He then leaned across the aisle to start talking to Steve's usual neighbor, feigning interest in her backpack of all things.

You were going to attempt to drag Billy to his rightful seat before you noticed Steve walk into the room. You felt your face flush as you dropped your gaze down to your notebook. You toyed with the cover, nearly ripping off the corner in your desperate bid for a distraction.

"Move it, Billy," you heard Steve demand as he pulled to a stop near his desk.

"Don't be rude, Harrington," Billy told Steve as he gestured towards the girl across the aisle from him. You noticed she looked nearly dazed at having Billy Hargrove's attention solely on her. "We're talking. Just take my seat today."

You shook your head and wished that you were brave enough to fling your notebook at his head. You really didn't want to draw any attention to yourself, though.

You heard Steve huff out a defeated sigh before he continued down the aisle in your direction. You noticed Billy track his movements, a satisfied grin on his face, before he nodded at you.

You bit your lip, burying the urge to yell at him as Steve slid into the seat next to yours.

"That guy is a real asshole," Steve grumbled as he slumped further down in his seat. "How do you stand him?"

You froze for a moment as you racked your brain for a witty reply. Wasn't that why Steve liked Nancy? She was clever and funny and

intelligent and beautiful. Even though she was with Jonathan Byers, he still seemed to be so smitten over her. What if you didn't quite measure up?

"Uh," you managed to get out before glancing quickly to him. "By only listening to about ten percent of what he actually says?"

Steve studied you for a moment before he snorted in approval. "He's lucky you give him that much," he observed before he pulled a pair of sunglasses out of the front pocket of his coat and slipped them onto his face.

You weren't sure if you were meant to say anything else, so you turned your attention towards the front of the class. You were aware of Steve twirling a pencil between his fingers as he waited for class to start. You wanted nothing more than to reach into your backpack and grab your journal. You had started a sketch of Steve the day before that you wanted to finish. There was an expression on his face now you longed to capture, but you wouldn't risk it with him sitting right next to you.

It was bad enough that Billy had caught a glimpse of the sketch, but if Steve happened to see it?

You didn't think you would manage to live through that kind of humiliation.

You were distracted for a moment by the sound of Billy's laughter. You couldn't help but wonder if he had another motive besides playing wingman for you with Steve as he leaned in closer to the girl next to him.

You rolled your eyes before you shot a helpless glance at Steve.

You were surprised to see that he was already considering you.

"Sorry," he told you when he realized you caught him staring. "It's just..." he trailed off before shooting a look at Billy. "Aren't you two together?"

"No," you hastily denied with a quick shake of your head. "I'm tutoring him," you simply offered as an explanation. That wasn't

really the right description for your relationship with Billy now, but you were hesitant to throw the 'friend' title around. Billy Hargrove didn't really seem the type to have friends and you didn't want to assume you were anything more to him than a way to get a better grade.

"Huh," Steve breathed in acknowledgement.

When he didn't offer anything else, you tried to think of a way to further the conversation. You longed to talk to Steve. You didn't really care about anything trivial like his previous status as high school royalty or his looks or perfect hair.

No, your crush reached all the way back to elementary school when Tommy Hagan accidentally bumped into you at recess in second grade and sent you sprawling on the asphalt of the basketball court. You had tears in your eyes as you looked down at the scrapes on your knees, blood beginning to well in the cuts.

Steve had been there to pick you up and escort you to the nurse's office. He stayed with you until the nurse assured him you would be fine.

It only took one act of chivalry to spark a crush that would persist for ten long years.

Over the years, you shied away from Steve. He had everyone wrapped around his finger and you couldn't help but think that you were nowhere near cool enough to warrant his attention. You spent so many afternoons in your kitchen lamenting your crush on Steve to your mom. She always tried to console you with a promise that you were far too special to hide from a boy you would forget about once you graduated high school.

You knew better, though. You didn't think there would ever be anything or anyone capable of overthrowing Steve's reign over your thoughts.

It didn't help that things had changed. *Steve* had changed. He shook off his 'King Steve' status during junior year after he started dating Nancy Wheeler and started an unlikely friendship with Jonathan

Byers.

You knew you still didn't stand a chance, but once word of Nancy dumping Steve started circulating around school, a foolish little flame of hope started to spark within you.

You never would have thought that Billy Hargrove would be the one to try to keep it lit.

When class started, you thought you lost the opportunity Billy had gifted to you. You were sure that Steve would zone out during class or attempt to listen to Mrs. Green's lesson.

You startled when the paper ball landed on your desk just a few minutes into Mrs. Green's lecture.

You glanced to Steve in question, but he had his head tipped back as he seemingly stared at the ceiling.

You slowly uncrumpled the piece of paper before reading the note scribbled on the page.

You getting any of this?

You couldn't help the tiny smile that stole across your face at seeing Steve's message.

You carefully wrote your own reply before slipping the paper back onto his desk once Mrs. Green's attention was back on the chalkboard.

You managed to keep a conversation going with Steve for the whole class. You felt a little thrill whenever he chuckled or grinned at whatever you had written in response to his words.

A part of you couldn't help but think that this was finally it. Steve had noticed you and you were finally having a conversation. Better yet, Steve seemed invested in what you had to say.

By the end of class, you were starting to crave his responses. You hated that you had managed to go from hopelessly crushing on Steve to hopefully anticipating more of his attention.

You took your time packing up your things in a vain attempt to stall. Your next class was sadly Steve-free and you wished for one sign that you weren't being misguided to think that Steve wanted to keep talking to you.

"So, hey," Steve started as he turned towards you. "I think..." he trailed off, his focus turning towards Nancy Wheeler and Jonathan Byers as they passed by the doorway of the classroom.

"You think?" You prompted when he didn't seem like he planned on elaborating.

"I'll see you later," Steve mumbled before he hurried from the room. You felt yourself practically deflate at the sound of him calling Nancy's name.

"Come on," Billy coaxed as he grabbed your backpack. "I saw you passing your little notes to Harrington. Fess up, Y/N. You got a date yet or what?"

"No," you answered as you reached out to try to take your backpack from Billy.

Billy carefully held your backpack just out of reach as he turned towards the door. "Well, something must've happened," he pointed out as you trailed dejectedly after him.

"Nothing happened," you told him before you finally managed to pull your backpack from his grasp.

"Ah," Billy mused when he led you out into the hallway and caught sight of Steve talking to Nancy. Billy clapped a hand to your shoulder and began to lead you away from the pair. "Tough break, kid," he muttered, completely ignoring the fact that you were the same age. "We'll just try harder next time."

"Please don't," you pleaded as you tried to forget how mortified you felt in that moment. You didn't think you could take more heartbreak or a possible rejection from Steve. You would simply live out the rest of your senior year with your head down and ignoring your feelings for Steve Harrington. They hadn't gotten you anywhere in a decade

and you doubted they would be much use to you now.

"Too late," Billy responded with a shake of his head. "I can't take you moping about anymore, so if it's Harrington you want, then it's Harrington you'll get."

You considered Billy for a moment, wondering why he was so adamant about fixing you up with Steve. As far as you were aware, they hated each other. But one look at Billy's earnest expression had you caving.

"Fine," you finally conceded with an exasperated groan. "Do your worst."

"Oh, I plan to," Billy assured with you a smug grin that did nothing to quell your nerves.

2. All the Stars Align

Notes for the Chapter:

Happy Halloween, everyone! Please accept my gift of part two to Boys Like You. I hope everyone has a safe and spooky holiday! 🎃

After foolishly getting your hopes up that Steve would somehow magically fall in love with you after sitting next to you for the length of one class, you reluctantly resigned yourself to more pining.

You were also starting to suspect that Billy didn't really have a plan.

By the end of the week, you had decided to just let the whole thing go. It was ridiculous to think that you actually had a shot with Steve 'The Hair' Harrington. Even if he was somehow over Nancy, then that didn't mean he would fall for you. You were just the smart kid who kept her head down and attempted to get through high school without calling any attention to herself. You were easily forgettable and Steve was never going to notice you outside of class.

You reasoned that you should just take the momentary win that you had managed to somehow stumble onto Steve's radar for one class period. It wasn't much, but it would have to be enough. It was all you were likely to get.

By the time school was over on Friday, you were already planning on spending the weekend moping. You would rent a movie or two, buy some junk food, and just spend the time distracting yourself with mindless entertainment. You were also hoping your mom would take pity on you and make you your favorite dessert if you looked pathetic enough.

You closed your locker, intent on heading towards the line of buses waiting to take kids home, when you were startled out of your thoughts by someone wrapping an arm around your shoulders. You didn't even have to look over to know that it was Billy.

"I'm not in the mood," you mumbled as you tried to shake his arm off.

"Oh, come on," he coaxed as he began to steer you towards the student parking lot. "At least let me give you a ride. You're too old to ride the bus."

You rolled your eyes, but didn't bother arguing. It would be nice not to have to listen to the ninth graders goof off in an attempt to look cool.

You let Billy lead you towards his car, taking a moment to appreciate the infamous Camaro everyone in school had been not-so-secretly admiring the first week Billy arrived in Hawkins. When he caught you eyeing the car with approval, a smirk appeared on his face.

"Oh, shut up," you grumbled as you reached out to open the passenger side door.

"Wait," he called as he nodded towards something behind you. "My stepsister is going to have to get into the backseat," he told you. "I've got to drop her off first or I'll never hear the end of it," he muttered with a bitter note to his voice.

You glanced over your shoulder to see a red-haired girl on a skateboard approaching the both of you. You noticed a scowl briefly pull at her mouth when she spotted you waiting next to the car before she smoothed out her expression.

Before you could even really consider what you were doing, you moved to open the passenger side door. You didn't wait for Billy to tell you to stop before you pushed the passenger seat forward and crawled into the back.

You heard Billy make a noise of protest, but when you glanced out the window, you noticed a brief surprised, pleased grin break out on Billy's stepsister's face. You remembered all of the times you had been annoyed when you were relegated to the backseat because one of your older cousins had claimed shotgun. You weren't going to make the car ride any more awkward by starting off on the wrong foot with her.

"She can sit back there," Billy insisted as he settled into the driver's seat. "She knows the drill by now."

"I don't mind," you assured him with a sincere smile.

Billy studied you in the rearview mirror for a moment before he scoffed. "Whatever," you heard him mumble before he started the car.

Billy's stepsister barely had enough time to drop into the passenger seat and close the door before he was peeling out of his parking spot. You hastily reached out for the car door in an attempt to steady yourself before scrambling to buckle yourself into your seat. You noticed the smirk on Billy's face and couldn't help but roll your eyes at his antics.

You weren't really sure what you were expecting out of the trip. You figured Billy would blare some rock music or take off down the back streets of Hawkins at a speed that was bound to make you nervous. While he did both of those things, there was also a strained tension that filled the car. You had to fight the urge to try to fill the silence, realizing with a painfully uneasy clarity that Billy and his stepsister must not get along.

You noticed Billy's shoulders tense and his jaw clench from time to time as if he was purposefully trying to hold back remarks that he wanted to make. Billy's stepsister kept her arms crossed and her gaze focused firmly out of the passenger side window, seemingly intent on trying to zone out for the car ride home.

You knew that you were just Billy's friend. Hell, you weren't even sure if he actually counted you as a friend. And while you knew it wasn't really your place to try to make friends when you might not be wanted, you couldn't help but try. You had always been a bit shy and awkward, but you figured if you were going to be in Billy's life, then you wanted to make a good impression on the people in his life.

"Hey," you finally said, leaning forward in your seat. You tapped Billy's stepsister on the shoulder, flinching back when she quickly whirled around to glare at you. You hesitantly held your hand out, beginning to regret your decision. "I'm Y/N," you introduced, hoping you weren't making a total idiot out of yourself.

You noticed Billy and his stepsister share a fleeting disbelieving look. Billy's stepsister quirked an eyebrow in question, before considering

you.

"Max," she cautiously offered before she reached out to shake your hand.

"It's nice to meet you, Max," you offered, hoping that you weren't coming off as fake.

"You too," Max muttered before she turned around in her seat, effectively cutting off the conversation.

You didn't want to force Max into a conversation she didn't want to have, so you settled back into your seat. You caught Billy watching you carefully in the rearview mirror before he hastily turned his attention back to the road when he realized he had your attention.

By the time Billy was pulling to a stop in front of a house you assumed was his, you couldn't help but wonder why he didn't get along with Max. Both of them seemed to be fans of anger-laced silence and while you knew your awkward attempt at small talk had been shot down, you still couldn't resist the urge to tell Max bye when she moved to scramble out of the car.

She turned to look at you as you ducked out of the car, moving to take the front passenger seat the moment she vacated it. She didn't look like she was all that impressed with you, but you didn't take much offense. If you had an older stepbrother you didn't get along with, then you were sure you wouldn't want to make nice with his friends either.

She lifted her hand in a brief wave before she glanced to Billy. "Use a condom," you heard Max mutter before she turned and made her way up to the house.

You saw Billy's hands tighten momentarily on the steering wheel before he took a deep breath and slowly relaxed them.

"So, where do you live?" He finally asked as he backed his car down the driveway.

You were surprised when you told him your address and he seemed to know where it was. You assumed that since he was still relatively

new to town, then you would have to give him step-by-step directions.

He let out a chuckle when he noticed your expression.

"I've taken many late-night drives around this little podunk wasteland. I know how to find everything."

You weren't really sure how to respond, so you settled for watching him out of the corner of your eye. You felt like you were seeing a different side to Billy. You seemed to be learning a lot about him from just one oddly uncomfortable car ride.

"So," Billy said, breaking the silence. "I've been thinking about your little Harrington situation."

"You have?" You had assumed that whatever plan he had thought up was effectively dead when the rest of the week passed without Billy so much as mentioning Steve.

"Yeah," he told you with a quick, wicked grin. "I think I've found a solution, but if it doesn't work, then I'm really going to have to pull out the big guns."

You couldn't help but groan in exasperation before you let your head fall back to hit the headrest. "Do I even want to know?"

"Probably not," Billy answered before he reached out to pat you on the shoulder. "But trust me, Y/N. I'm a guy, so I know what's going to get our attention. Even Princess Steve won't be immune to it."

You shook your head, tempted to berate him for the nickname, but decided to let it slide for the moment. "I hope your first plan works out, then," you couldn't help but say, feeling a smile tug at your lips at Billy's unrestrained laugh.

The rest of the ride passed in a comfortable silence that was a complete turnaround from the tension that previously filled the car when Max was in the front passenger seat. You were content to simply listen to Billy hum lyrics under his breath, his fingers tapping out the beat of the current song on the steering wheel. It was nice to see this side to Billy, since he seemed like he was always keeping

such careful control of what he showed the people around him. This Billy seemed more relaxed and laid-back, which in turn put you more at ease in his presence.

When Billy pulled to a stop in front of your house, you moved to immediately open the door. You were about to thank him for the ride home, but you froze with your foot half-raised while you were in the process of sliding out of the front seat. You turned in your seat to look at Billy, knowing that you were probably toeing the line of whatever boundaries were present between you.

"Why me?" You found yourself wondering against your better judgement.

"What are you talking about?" Billy asked as he glanced to you.

"Why are you even bothering with me? You've made it pretty clear since you got to Hawkins that you hate Steve. Not to mention all the other people you could be hanging out with instead of me. Why are you going to all this trouble to help me?"

You noticed Billy's grip tighten around the steering wheel and worried that you had gone too far. You should never have opened your mouth and ruined the fragile peace between you. You should have just been happy with whatever he gave you, since it seemed to be a lot more sincere than what everyone else received.

You were startled out of your thoughts when Billy began to talk.

"You weren't like the others," he finally offered with a small shrug of his shoulders. "You were immune to my charm and you weren't looking to get into my pants. I always assumed you were just some meek, timid chick, but you weren't scared off by me." He let out a tiny, helpless laugh before he shook his head. "You even told me off, but you also seemed to *care*. I had never met anyone like you before, because you were capable of surprising me. It made me respect you," he finished before he glanced away from you, as if he couldn't bear to know what you were really thinking. As if he was worried that he had revealed too much.

You knew that Billy rarely confided in people. He seemed to only

offer people a surface persona. He threw up walls and walked around like he owned the whole damn town, but you saw through it all. The past half an hour alone had done a lot to convince you that there was so much more to Billy Hargrove than most people ever discovered. You just hoped he trusted you enough to continue to confide in you.

Billy cleared his throat before he shifted in his seat. "So, even though I can't stand Harrington, I figured he can't be completely terrible if he's got your attention. Besides, you've been helping me out with my schoolwork, so it only seemed fair that you got something in return."

You caught the flash of a smirk on his face and knew what he was about to say.

"Since you seemed like you weren't too thrilled by my first offer of repayment," he purred before he blatantly checked you out.

You scoffed before you reached out to playfully shove him. "I'm immune to your charm, remember?" You reminded him as you finally moved to duck out of the passenger seat. You closed the door and leaned down to look at him through the open window. "And Billy? Thanks," you couldn't help but tell him.

"Don't mention it," Billy told you as he dipped his head to get a better look at you. "Just be ready on Monday, alright?"

"What's happening on Monday?" You asked before taking a quick step back when Billy put the car into gear and began to pull out of the driveway. When a smirk was your only answer, you couldn't help but long for the days when Billy Hargrove wasn't even on your radar, much less the closest thing you had to a best friend. "Oh, come on!" You yelled after him with a groan. "What's happening on Monday?"

Billy shook his head before waving, completely ignoring your question.

You sighed before you turned and trudged up your driveway and towards the front door of your house. You had a feeling it was going to be a long weekend.

You spent the weekend nearly anxious with worry. You didn't even

have to try to affect your best pitiful expression to get your mom to ply you with your favorite dessert. When she also offered to treat you to pizza, you figured you must have seemed like a complete mess.

Honestly, you *felt* like a complete mess.

By the time Monday rolled around, you were a nervous wreck. You weren't really sure what Billy had planned, but all you could hope was that it wouldn't completely embarrass you.

When the bell rang and signaled the end of second period, you had to force yourself to take deep breaths. You knew that everything would be fine, but you hated not knowing what was supposed to happen.

As you dropped into your usual seat for math class, you kept your eyes trained on the door. You knew that whatever Billy had planned was going to happen soon, so you wanted to catch him as soon as he walked in the door. You weren't sure if you were going to try to dissuade him or try to get more information out of him, but you were surprised by the sight of Steve walking into the class. He seemed to be sharing a hushed conversation with the girl who usually sat beside him, but when he briefly glanced your way, you averted your gaze to your desk.

You ran your fingernails lightly over words that had been scratched into the surface of the desk by countless students over the years, trying to appear as if you were busy.

When someone dropped into the seat next to you, you let out a sigh of relief. You opened your mouth to give Billy a piece of your mind for leaving you in suspense all weekend when you were taken aback by the sight of Steve occupying Billy's usual seat.

"Uh," you helpfully uttered, feeling extraordinarily inept in that moment.

"Looks like we're going to be neighbors again," Steve told you before he started shuffling through the pages in his binder, seemingly searching for something.

You weren't quite sure what was going on, but before you could

really question the weird turn of events, Mrs. Green walked into the classroom and asked for everyone to hand in their homework.

By the time you handed your worksheet to the kid in front of you so it could be passed up the aisle towards the teacher, you were starting to get a clue about what Billy's plan had entailed.

"Alright, class," Mrs. Green started once she had everyone's homework placed in a neat pile on the corner of her desk. "We're going to be starting a project this week. For the next couple of weeks, the person sitting to your right will be your project partner."

You felt your eyes widen in surprise as you resisted the urge to glance at Steve. Your brain quickly spun through a dozen dizzying thoughts, helping you reach one alarming conclusion.

Steve was sitting next to you. Steve was sitting to the right of you. Mrs. Green wanted you to work on a project. Your project partner was the person sitting to your right. Steve was sitting to your right. *Steve* was your partner for the project. Steve would have to work with you for the next couple of weeks. He would have to talk to you. You would have to talk to him. You would have to hang out together. You would have to study together. You would have to work together. Steve was going to actually regularly notice you.

Steve. The former king of Hawkins High would be your study buddy. Steve 'The Hair' Harrington would have to talk to you outside of class. The guy you had been hopelessly crushing on since second grade was going to have to actually speak to you because his grade depended on the both of you working together. Steve would be depending on you.

You. Steve. You *and* Steve.

You felt like you could hardly think as something caught your attention from just out of the corner of your eye.

Billy was turned around in his seat. You couldn't help but notice that it was the seat that Steve usually occupied. Billy flashed you a pleased grin before surreptitiously offering you a thumbs up.

It didn't take you long to connect the dots. You assumed Billy had found out about the project and coordinated another seat switch with Steve through Steve's usual math class neighbor. Billy had mentioned a plan and what a plan it was. Maybe, you couldn't help but think to yourself, you really didn't give Billy enough credit.

You glanced hurriedly to Steve to see if he noticed Billy's smug satisfaction. Steve wasn't looking at Billy, though. He was looking at you.

"It looks like we're going to be spending a lot more time together," Steve said with a smile that assured you enough that you felt something akin to relief beginning to replace the anxiety flooding through you. Steve didn't seem upset at all by the twist of events. Oddly enough, he seemed pleased too.

"Yeah," you breathed in agreement, scrambling for anything else to say. When nothing else came to mind except the stark realization that Steve Harrington was likely going to get to know you over the next couple of weeks, you couldn't help but think that you were so terribly screwed.

Notes for the Chapter:

Part 3??? Honestly, I think I'm tempted to make this a series if anyone wants it. I have at least a few more ideas for the next couple of chapters.

Also, I'm being purposefully vague about the name of the girl who usually sits next to Steve in class. Mostly because I don't want to accidentally use someone's real name who's reading this and just take them right out of the story, so for now, she doesn't actually have a set name. I also want to kind of flesh out the characters and give them more development, so that's why I decided to introduce Max, because I wanted to delve a bit deeper into Billy's character, and I feel like she's a good starting point.

Thank you to everyone for the love that was shown for part one. I got my confidence destroyed, but then

there was just such an outpouring of love for it, and that totally made everything better.

3. The Moment That I Have Been Dreaming About

Notes for the Chapter:

I kind of lost my confidence in writing for a while, but I'm back with a new update just in time for the holidays! I hope you all enjoy! ❤️

"So, how's it going with Harrington?" Billy asked as he reached out and stole a fry from your tray.

You rolled your eyes before pushing your lunch tray across the table towards him. "It's fine," you admitted with a shrug of your shoulders.

"*Just* fine?" Billy prompted as he stole another fry. "You've been sitting next to each other for a whole week and all you have for me is *fine*?"

You quirked an eyebrow at him before you reached across the table to steal his pudding cup. You dodged when he moved to swat at your hand, sending him a triumphant smirk, before grabbing the plastic spoon on your tray. "I didn't think you'd be interested in gossip," you told him as you peeled back the top of the pudding. You only managed to get a spoonful before Billy stole it back. "Besides, I thought you didn't have lunch this period. What are you even doing here?"

"You've been moping around lately, so I figured I'd keep you company. I couldn't take the thought of you sitting here all alone and lookin' all pathetic."

"I have other friends besides you, you know?" It wasn't strictly true. You had friends, sure. Acquaintances, certainly. But anyone that bothered to actually sit with you at lunch or bug you as much as Billy did? Not really.

Billy ignored you, instead opting to lean forward in his seat and fix you with a careful look. "I really thought once I practically handed Harrington to you on a silver platter that you'd at least stop looking so pitiful all the damn time."

You scowled at Billy before throwing one of your fries at him. "I am not moping and I am not pitiful."

Billy looked unimpressed before he set his half-eaten pudding cup down on the table. "Look, I think you can do a hell of a lot better than Harrington, but for fuck's sake, Y/N," he sighed with a shake of his head. "Make a move already."

"It's not that easy," you tried to argue as you avoided looking at him. "He's still hung up on Nancy."

Billy huffed out a frustrated breath before he ducked his head, prompting you to finally meet his eyes. "Wheeler is dating that freak Jonathan Byers," he pointed out.

"Don't do that," you muttered before you started piling your trash on your tray.

"Do what?"

"Don't call Jonathan that," you told him before you grabbed your tray and stood up.

You heard Billy sigh before he moved to follow you. You shot him a quick look over your shoulder, pointedly looking at his abandoned pudding cup, and waited for him to get the hint. He groaned in frustration before he grabbed the pudding cup and walked over to the trash can before throwing it away.

"There. You happy?" He drawled as he stepped aside to let you throw your trash away.

"Ecstatic," you told him before you beamed at him.

Billy looked like he was barely refraining from rolling his eyes as he slung his arm over your shoulders. "The project only has a week to go. We present next Friday. You're really telling me you're just going to let this pass you by?"

You shrugged off his arm before you opened the door to the cafeteria. "It's not that easy."

"That what you *always* say. But I'm telling you that it is that easy," Billy argued as he let you lead him towards your locker.

You bit your lip before glancing at him. "What if he doesn't want me? What if I'm nothing like her?" That had always been one of your biggest fears. You always felt like you didn't quite measure up. You didn't really fit into any specific high school clique. You weren't really a nerd and you certainly weren't an artist. You didn't play sports and you would never qualify as popular. You weren't even really sure how you made friends, let alone how you kept them, but somehow you had managed to snare Billy. Half the time you wished you hadn't let him charm his way right into your good graces, but other times you weren't quite sure what you would do without him.

"You're light years beyond Wheeler," Billy assured you as he bumped his arm into yours. "You think I hang out with just anyone?"

"If you think it'll get you into their pants, then yes."

Billy shot you a brief glare before a smirk formed on his face. "I'm not really holding out hope that you'll give up your ridiculous crush on Steve and suddenly realize I'd be the *much* better lay, but if you ever do want to take me for a test ride, I'd be more than happy to show you a good time."

"You're ridiculous," you muttered as you reached your locker. You turned and leaned back against your locker door, considering Billy for a moment. "If you were me, what would you do?"

"Oh," Billy got out on a laugh as he brought his arm up, his hand resting right beside your head, practically boxing you in as he took a step closer. "I'd fuck me for sure," he purred, standing so close to you that you couldn't help but think that anyone who didn't know better would probably think the two of you looked incredibly intimate.

You opened your mouth, intent on asking Billy to be serious for once, when you heard footsteps coming down the hallway in your direction.

You and Billy turned your heads to see Steve, Nancy, and Jonathan heading in your direction. Their heads were bent close together, all

three of them focused on something Nancy was holding, before they seemed to notice they weren't alone in the hallway.

Jonathan was the first to notice that you and Billy were standing there. His eyes widened for a brief moment before he cleared his throat and muttered something to Steve and Nancy under his breath. Both Nancy and Steve glanced up, finally noticing the pair of you.

Nancy and Jonathan quickly averted their eyes, as if they assumed you and Billy really were having a *moment*, but Steve didn't look away. His eyes flicked from Billy to you and then back to Billy. His eyes narrowed before his lips tugged down in a scowl as he practically stared Billy down.

You glanced to Billy to see that there was a dumb, smug grin on his face as he met Steve's gaze. There was something oddly calculating about his expression as he swayed even closer to you, putting him ridiculously close to you.

Steve rolled his eyes before he glanced away, his face flushing in what you assumed was embarrassment. Although, from the way his hands clenched into fists at his sides, you thought it might have been anger.

"Well, how about that," you heard Billy muse as he watched the group pass by, before he tore himself away from you. "Harrington!" He called, prompting Steve to freeze in the middle of the hallway.

"What?" Steve bit out as he turned to regard Billy.

"What the fuck are you doing?" You hissed at Billy, reaching out to tug on the sleeve of his jacket in an effort to derail him.

"Would you do me a favor and give Y/N a ride home after school? I've gotta take my car in to get some work done."

Steve furrowed his brows as he glanced quickly to you.

When he didn't say anything, Billy chuckled in amusement. "Oh, come on, Harrington. You're not really going to make her ride the bus, are you? She's way too cool for that and I thought you were a gentleman."

Steve glared at Billy before he shook his head. "Of course I'll give her a ride."

"Good," Billy said before he looked at you. "She'll love that," he added with a wink in your direction.

You shook your head, wishing more than anything that Billy would just shut the hell up. "Really, it's okay. I can ride the bus," you told Steve before you shot a glare at Billy.

"No, hey," Steve immediately rushed to assure you. You noticed that when he finally quit glaring at Billy and looked to you, his expression softened. "It's no problem. Just meet me at my car after school."

You struggled to figure out to respond, so you settled for nodding your head. "Sure. Thanks," you agreed.

Jonathan whispered something to Steve and then put a hand on the small of Nancy's back, ushering her down the hallway.

"Right," Steve muttered before he looked towards you. "See you after school, Y/N."

"See you," you called after him, watching him walk away, before you turned your attention to Billy. "What the hell is wrong with you?"

Billy shrugged his shoulders before he took a few steps away from you. "Looks like I just got you a ride from Harrington," he pointed out with a smirk, doing absolutely nothing to try to mask the innuendo. "I've got to go, but I'll catch up with you later."

"Wait," you tried to stop him, but Billy had already taken off down the hallway. You groaned before letting yourself fall back on your locker. You couldn't help but think that there was no way this actually worked out in your favor.

You felt a nervous anticipation throughout the rest of the school day. You couldn't quite manage to make yourself focus in your classes and you kept aimlessly doodling in the margins of your notebook paper. You kept your head down, hoping your teachers wouldn't call on you, because you weren't sure you would even be able to remember your own name let alone the answer to whatever question they asked you.

You felt almost sick to your stomach as you grabbed what you needed from your locker once school was over and headed out towards the student parking lot. You had to shake out your hands as you stepped outside, hating that they were so clammy from the anxiety that had been plaguing you since lunch. You glanced quickly around the student parking lot, noticing that Steve wasn't at his car yet, and had the brief urge to just make a break for the line of buses waiting for students to fill them.

You took a deep breath before you nodded your head, silently psyching yourself up for what you were about to do, and feeling relief that no one was noticing how idiotic you were acting at the moment. You could only imagine that Billy would be laughing his ass off if he could see you now.

Before you could take a step towards Steve's car, you felt a hand on your shoulder.

"Hey, did you forget which one is mine?" You heard Steve ask from just behind you.

"What, no," you rushed to answer as you turned to look at him. You were momentarily caught off-guard by how unfairly gorgeous he looked when his lips were quirked up at the corners in a smirk. You felt nearly transfixed by the way the afternoon sunlight was hitting his brown eyes, drawing you in until you were startled by the sight of Nancy walking up to join the two of you.

"Hey, are we good to go?" She looked amused as she regarded you and Steve, her eyebrow ticked up in silent judgement.

It was then that you realized you and Steve must have been standing right there in the student parking lot, simply watching each other, for a few drawn-out moments. You felt a cautious flare of hope that maybe Steve had been just as captivated by you as you were with him.

"Oh right," Steve said as he finally turned his attention towards Nancy. He glanced quickly back to you, an apologetic look on his face. "I've got to give Nancy a ride home too. Jonathan bailed on her."

Nancy rolled her eyes before she shook her head. "He had to do something with Will." She turned towards you and held her hand out. "Hey, you're Y/N, right?"

"Right," you agreed with a nod. You had to fight to keep the grimace off your face as you shook hands with her. You had been so worried about spending time alone with Steve in his car that you didn't even consider the fact that there might be company.

You felt awkward enough that you silently slipped into the backseat once you got to Steve's car, not even bothering to make a play for the passenger seat. You sat with your arms folded across your chest, fighting the urge to bite your nails, as you listened to Nancy and Steve talk on the way to the Wheeler household.

You felt like the unwanted third wheel as you let the sound of Nancy and Steve's conversation wash over you. Nancy seemed to have no problem making Steve laugh his unrestrained, dorky laugh and she kept sending him soft, private smiles whenever he would make a joke or say something funny. Billy had assured you that Nancy was with Jonathan now, but what if he was wrong? Nancy and Steve still seemed awfully familiar with each other for two people who had supposedly broken up.

Once, you accidentally caught Steve watching you in the rearview mirror, a thoughtful look on his face. When he noticed you were looking back, he hastily glanced away, seemingly focusing back on the road.

You weren't really sure what to think, but it made you feel better to know that you hadn't been completely forgotten in the backseat. It still did nothing to assuage the dread you felt as the car ride continued and you had to listen to the former couple's banter.

By the time Nancy was ducking out of the car, waving to you and sending Steve a smile in thanks, you were sure you had it all wrong. Maybe, you couldn't help but think, Nancy was just lucky enough to be dating Jonathan *and* Steve.

"So?" Steve asked, pulling you from your thoughts. "You going to join me up here or am I suddenly running a taxi service?"

"Sorry," you breathed, at a loss for what else to say, before you pushed open the door to the backseat and moved to slide into the passenger seat.

"That's better," you heard Steve mutter before he put the car into gear and pulled away from the curb in front of the Wheeler house.

You couldn't quite stop yourself from fidgeting in your seat. You weren't really sure what you were supposed to do now. Billy had claimed it was so easy to just go for it, but Nancy had thrown a wrench into your plans. Your confidence was practically diminished just from watching the way Steve and Nancy interacted with each other. Were they friends? More than friends? Dating? Who the hell knew?

It wasn't even like you could just come right out and ask. You didn't want to give yourself away and you didn't want to embarrass yourself so horribly that you would never want to show your face at school again. So, you settled for an awkward silence that only made you even more sure that any relationship you had with Steve wouldn't work out anyways. If you couldn't even talk to the guy, then how the hell would you ever make it through a date with him?

"So, uh, what's your address?" Steve asked as he quickly glanced at you before looking at the road again. His cheeks had flushed, as if he was embarrassed that he hadn't thought to ask where you lived before he started driving.

You told him your address, wondering if you would have to give him step-by-step directions.

"Oh, right," Steve said before he nodded his head. "I know where that is."

His fingers tapped gently on the steering wheel and he kept darting quick glances at you. You wondered if he felt just as awkward as you did in that moment.

"Have you seen any good movies lately?" Steve asked, breaking the brief, tense silence between the two of you. "There's a couple coming out later this year that look pretty good."

You struggled to find something to say. You hadn't been to the movies in a while, but you so badly wanted to have a conversation with Steve. You were so worried about saying the wrong thing, though. You wanted to know how to make him laugh like Nancy had made him laugh. You wanted him to want you like he so obviously wanted Nancy.

The conversation felt so stilted that you could feel your anxiety getting worse. You wanted to somehow make it better, but the silences between you grew longer and your words came out fumbling and stuttering. You knew you were making a complete idiot of yourself, but you couldn't seem to stop.

You weren't far from your house when Steve glanced to you again. "Since we've got some extra time together, did you want to talk about our project?"

You blinked at Steve, your mind blank for a few moments, before you seemed to catch up to what he was asking. "Sure," you responded before you reached into your bag and grabbed your binder. You opened it up to the notes you had taken for the project. You were going to have to do a presentation, so you figured it would be good to focus on that for now.

The conversation went much smoother as you pointed out formulas you would have to know and points you would have to make for your presentation. You barely noticed when Steve pulled to a stop in front of your house, his focus turning fully on you.

You scribbled down a few notes when he brought up good points, nodding your head as he talked to show you agreed with him. You flashed him a smile when you were done writing, showing him the paper.

"We're off to a good start. We might even finish before it's due," you told him with a grin. You picked your head up, noticing that Steve's head was bent close to yours, his focus on the paper in your lap.

He lifted his head, his eyes meeting yours. There was one moment where you thought he might lean in towards you. He swayed for a moment, as if he felt drawn to you, before he blinked and shook his

head. He let out a harsh breath as he sat back in his seat, carding his fingers through his hair in what looked a lot like frustration.

"See you in class?" He asked with a smile that seemed a bit forced.

"Oh," you breathed, not quite sure where his shift in attitude had come from. "Yeah, definitely," you rushed to agree as you stuffed your binder back into your bag. "Thanks for driving me home. You didn't have to."

Steve snorted before he offered you a more sincere smile. "I wanted to. Besides, as much as I hate to admit it, Hargrove is right. You're way too cool to be riding the bus. If you ever need a ride again..." he trailed off, letting you know that he was offering to drive you home again if needed.

"Thanks, Steve," you murmured before you made yourself get out of the car. You raised your hand in an awkward wave as you walked towards your front door, catching the sight of Steve waving in return.

Once you got inside your house, you dropped your bag to the floor and leaned back against your front door. You felt so frustrated with how everything had turned out. You hated that you had been so awkward when it should have been so easy. You should have said something, *anything*, but instead you had stammered and been so flustered that Steve probably thought you were completely clueless.

You were startled out of your thoughts by the sound of someone knocking on the front door. You foolishly hoped for one moment that it was Steve coming back to sweep you off your feet, but when you opened your door, you were nearly unsurprised to see Billy standing there.

"How did it go with Harrington?" He asked as he brushed past you, not even waiting for you to invite him inside. "Did you finally seal the deal?"

"No. It was a total disaster," you groaned as you shut the front door behind him. You leaned back against it again before letting yourself slide to the floor, frowning up at Billy. "Nancy was there. And then I was just so stuck on the idea that he's still in love with her that I

couldn't even think of what to say once we were alone. The only time I could get a coherent sentence out was when we talked about our project." You groaned before letting your head fall back against the front door. "Maybe that's all that we're ever going to have in common. School," you sneered with enough distaste that Billy chuckled in response.

Billy moved to crouch down in front of you, his lips ticked up in an amused smirk. "How did Steve act?"

You narrowed your eyes at Billy, suddenly suspicious. "Why do you even care? What are you even doing here? I thought you would have gotten bored of this by now."

Billy simply shrugged his shoulders. "There was nothing good on TV. Thought I might find my own entertainment here."

You scowled at him before you moved to stand up. You brushed past him, ignoring his noise of protest, before you trudged into the living room and threw yourself down on the couch. "Ugh," you groaned up at the ceiling. "I'll never love again."

"Oh, for fuck's sake," you heard Billy mutter as he joined you on the couch. "Stop being so dramatic. I'm sure it wasn't that bad. Besides, if his reaction to seeing us together earlier told me anything, it's that it's not as one-sided as you think."

"No way," you argued with a shake of your head. "Let's just give up. It's a lost cause."

"Hell no," Billy immediately refuted. "I've managed to get you this far, haven't I? Harrington just needs a little push and I know how to give it to him."

You watched Billy warily for a moment before you managed to speak. Billy's plans so far had only ended up with you feeling awkward as hell, even if you couldn't deny they usually did end up with you spending more time with Steve. "What do you have in mind?"

The satisfied look on Billy's face did absolutely nothing to make your nerves abate.

"I think it's finally time to bring out the big guns."

Notes for the Chapter:

This has at least two more parts to go, maybe three? But would anyone be interested in a sequel that takes on more canon events? This is set between seasons two and three, so I'd be drawing more from season three. There would be angst, but a happy ending, I promise! So...would anyone be interested?

ALSO: I now have a writing side-blog on Tumblr as [imagine-you](#), so if you're interested in more of my writing, you can find me there!

4. Crying Over Stupid Words

Notes for the Chapter:

Just in time for Valentine's Day! Happy (early) Valentine's Day, everyone! ♡

"I'm sorry," you said as you stared at Billy. "I must have heard that wrong. You want to *what*?"

"You heard me," Billy challenged with a raised eyebrow.

"But why?" You couldn't help but ask, feeling increasingly lost with each passing second.

"Because there's nothing that makes a guy all riled up like a little jealousy," Billy pointed out with a smirk. "Harrington won't be able to resist you."

"Your logic is flawed. Steve has done a perfectly good job of resisting me this long. How is this going to change his mind?"

"Look, when I was all up in your space earlier, Steve looked like he was just about to knock me away from you. He was *jealous*, which means he's interested in you. We just need to make sure he realizes it."

"So your big plan is to pretend to date me? You really think that's going to work?"

"Oh, it will. I'll bet you anything Harrington will want you all the more once he realizes you're off the market. Plus, it'll drive him crazy."

You quirked an eyebrow at him before rolling your eyes. "Again, your logic is flawed. There's no way Steve is going to care."

"He will," Billy insisted. "Look, what do you have to lose? You pretend to date me for just one night before we have some epic breakup so Harrington might get a clue and realize you're available or you pretend to date me for one night and Harrington realizes he's

being a dumbass as usual and that he should have asked you out when he had the chance. What's so bad about that?"

You squinted at Billy, not wanting to admit that the idea of pretending to date him, even if was just for one night, made you incredibly nervous. Billy was your best friend and you had seen from time to time how he acted around the girls he was interested in. You weren't sure you could go through with it even if it was all for show.

"I know what you're thinking," Billy said, tearing you out of your thoughts.

"No, you don't," you immediately denied with a shake of your head.

"You're thinking that there's no way in hell that you want to play my girlfriend for several stupid reasons." At your surprised expression, a smirk appeared on Billy's face. He reached forward and tapped a finger against your forehead. "Like I said, I know what you're thinking."

"Lucky guess," you grumbled, glancing quickly away from him.

"Or I know you," Billy countered before he reached out to pat you on the shoulder. "Sorry, Y/N, but you're not as mysterious as you like to think."

"I don't think I'm mysterious," you argued as you shot him a quick glare. "I don't," you insisted when he offered you a disbelieving look.

"The shy, smart girl with a thing for the popular jock. The girl who would rather pine away and write in her diary about how love is unfair than try to have a conversation with said jock. The girl who wants to hide away instead of showing that jock she could totally rock his world. Yeah, you're not mysterious at all. I've got you all figured out." Billy offered you a smirk as he sat back in his seat. "You're trying to write this whole thing off before you even try. If you can get me a passing grade in class, then trust me, Y/N, you can do this."

You met Billy's gaze, your resolve crumbling at how earnest he looked. His whole speech was practically downright mushy

considering who it was coming from and you couldn't help but roll your eyes as you settled back into the couch. "How would it even work? What, we just stroll on into school on Monday holding hands?"

"Not quite," Billy said before he raised his hips off the couch, attempting to pull something out of the back pocket of his jeans.

You snorted and glanced away, not wanting him to see your amusement.

"What's got you so entertained?"

"Nothing," you denied with a shrug.

"Oh, come on," he coaxed. "You found something funny. What was it?" He wondered as he unfolded the piece of paper he had freed from his back pocket.

"It's just..." you trailed off, not wanting Billy to think you were making fun of him. "Your jeans are ridiculously tight. Must drive all the girls wild," you drawled with an exaggerated roll of your eyes.

"Shut up," Billy grunted before he shoved the piece of paper at you. From the look on his face, you worried that you had managed to strike a nerve after all, but before you could apologize, you caught a glimpse of the paper he was so eager for you to see.

"Oh, you have to be fucking kidding me," you groaned.

The paper was a flyer for a Valentine's Day party at Tina's house on Saturday night. It was pink with hearts crowding around the edges of the page. "Show up as single and be ready to mingle or spend the night with that special someone," you read aloud before you glanced up at Billy. "And you're going to be my special someone?"

Billy shrugged his shoulders, looking momentarily pleased with himself, before he reached out to take the flyer from you. "Harrington will be there and he'll see the both of us together. We'll hold hands and I'll put my arm around you and it'll drive him crazy. Trust me," Billy stressed as he met your eyes.

You weren't really sure what to think. You worried that if Steve saw

you with Billy, then he would only grow to hate you. Right now, he seemed to at least think you were a decent person, but you knew he hated Billy. You also didn't really see how pretending to date Billy would score you a date with Steve. You were sure there had to be at least a few movies that explained why this was a bad idea.

"Trust me," Billy insisted when he noticed your hesitance.

You sighed before you conceded with a nod of your head. "No kissing," you immediately negotiated.

"Take all the fun out of it, sure," Billy mused with a wink.

"I'm serious," you told him. "I like you, but I don't want to kiss you."

Billy considered you for a moment before he nodded his head. "Trust me, I wouldn't offer this if I thought that was the case."

You studied Billy, needing to reassure yourself that he was serious. You remembered him telling you that he only gave you the time of day because you didn't seem to want him like every other girl in school. You weren't really sure if you would ever understand Billy Hargrove, but you couldn't help but think that Billy just really wanted someone he could consider a friend. Someone who didn't outright want something from him other than friendship and comradery. Maybe, you couldn't help but think, Billy Hargrove wasn't as tough and unaffected as he wanted everyone to believe.

"Fine," you finally said. "So, what's the plan?"

Billy's plan involved simply showing up at the party, his arm around your shoulders the second you walked through the door, and pressed close to your side with a self-satisfied smirk on his face.

So, not really a plan at all.

"You've got to be fucking kidding me," you muttered as Billy led you into the throng of teenagers that had taken over Tina's house.

"Relax," Billy grumbled as he pulled you in closer to his side. "Stop looking like I just ran over your cat."

You sighed, attempting to loosen the tension in your shoulders as you forced a smile onto your face.

You were starting to freak out just the tiniest bit. There were so many people packed into Tina's house and you couldn't even see Steve or anyone else that you actually knew. Why did you agree to go along with this? What was the point?

"Well, holy shit," you heard someone exclaim from behind you.

You turned, already knowing that you were going to regret giving Tommy Hagan any of your attention. You weren't surprised to see Carol pressed close to Tommy's side, a vicious grin on her face as she considered you.

"Scraping the bottom of the barrel for dates now, Billy?" Carol asked with a sneer in your direction.

"Yeah, since when are you into nerds, man? Did she promise to get you a good grade in exchange for a fuck?" Tommy asked with a nasty smirk.

You tensed up at Billy's side. Tommy and Carol were two of your least favorite people at Hawkins High and the feeling of dislike was definitely mutual.

"Fuck off, Hagan," Billy drawled with a glare. "No one gives a shit what you think."

Carol opened her mouth to say something, but Billy tugged you away from the pair before she could get a word out.

"Aren't they your friends?" You couldn't help but wonder as you let Billy lead you over towards the drinks set up in the kitchen.

"They wish," Billy muttered before he grabbed you a cup of punch. "Drink this. It'll help you feel better."

You scowled at him, but accepted the drink. You took a sip of the punch before scrunching your face up in distaste. "What the hell is in this?"

"Pure fuel!" A guy shouted as he passed you, nodding at Billy as he went.

"You see? This is why I don't go to parties," you insisted as Billy nudged you away from the counter. "I don't belong here."

"You belong here," Billy argued with a sigh. "Now, drink that and let's get out there," he continued before he nodded towards the impromptu dance floor in Tina's living room.

"Out there?" You couldn't help but ask, eyeing the teenagers dancing just a few feet away.

"Out there," Billy confirmed with a nod of his head. "It's useless arguing with me, Y/N," he added when you opened your mouth to protest.

You frowned at Billy before taking a quick sip of your drink. One more glance out at the dance floor had you downing half your drink, trying to fight the grimace off your face at the taste.

You felt like you would never be ready for the moment Billy led you out onto the floor. He didn't make you dance or anything that would immediately make you uncomfortable, but he did make sure to keep you at his side as he practically held court among the other students from Hawkins High.

You weren't sure how much time passed before Billy left you to go get himself another drink. It felt like years could pass and you would still be stuck there with Billy's arm around your shoulders while you pretended to enjoy yourself as several of the other girls in your class threw you glares for being there with Billy. Billy seemed to enjoy the attention, a smirk on his face as he watched another kid in your class, Andrew, chug a beer while Andrew's girlfriend attempted to get Billy to notice her.

One person after another came by seeking Billy's attention or approval and you couldn't help but find it all ridiculous. You knew that Billy had somehow beat Steve in the school's popularity contest, but you never realized just how tedious and stupid it all seemed. Billy seemed to love the attention, but you noticed there was something

beneath the smile he plastered on his face as yet another guy came up to Billy and gave him a pat on the back.

"Does it ever get old?" You wondered as you made yourself swallow down the last of your drink.

"What?"

"Being King of Hawkins," you clarified before you rolled your eyes.

"Never," Billy answered with a smirk. He reached out to grab your empty cup before he took a step away from you. "Stay here. I'll be right back."

You didn't really like the idea of being left to fend for yourself in a crowd of people you didn't really know. You had been looking for Steve most of the time you were stuck at Billy's side, but Steve had yet to make an appearance. You thought you had caught a glimpse of Jonathan and Nancy, but you weren't quite sure. If Jonathan and Nancy were here, then would Steve avoid this party simply because his ex was here? What if he wasn't even here and this whole plot of Billy's was all for nothing?

You were starting to wish you still had a drink in your hand just to have something to do when you felt someone tap you on the shoulder.

"Never thought I'd see you here," you heard someone say from just behind you.

You knew that voice. It belonged to the one person you had been searching for all night.

"Steve," you said as you turned to look at him. "Hey," you added as you struggled to think of something to say.

Steve shot you a wide grin, his hair falling into his face as he ducked his head. "If I knew you'd want to come to this party, we could have gone together." Steve's eyes widened for a moment before he grimaced. "I mean, I could have given you a ride here. Don't tell me you walked all the way here."

"Oh, no," you admitted with a wince. "I actually came with--"

"Harrington," Billy drawled as he sidled up to you. He handed you your drink before he wrapped his arm around your waist. "Why you botherin' my girl?"

"*Your* girl?" Steve asked with an incredulous laugh. His eyes narrowed as he considered Billy before his eyes dipped to consider Billy's arm around you. "When did that happen?"

"Oh, it's very recent. Didn't want this one spending Valentine's Day all alone," Billy explained with a wink in your direction. "Only an idiot would have let her get away," Billy continued as he reeled you in even closer to his side, a shit-eating grin on his face as he considered Steve. "So, you here all alone, Harrington? That's a shame," he said with a tone that gave away that he found it more amusing than anything.

"Fuck off, Billy," Steve snapped with a glare.

"You see, I don't think I will," Billy argued with a step in Steve's direction. "You think I want you hanging around my girlfriend and flirting with her?"

"Billy," you hissed, trying to get him to stop. Steve was only looking more upset by the moment and Billy looked like he was enjoying every second of it.

"It's pathetic," Billy sneered before he drained his cup. "You've got a real bad habit of hanging around girls who are already taken like Wheeler and now Y/N. If you wanted Y/N, then you should have done something about it."

"That's enough," you snapped at Billy. This wasn't supposed to be part of the plan. Billy wasn't supposed to piss Steve off and he certainly wasn't supposed to rub your relationship in Steve's face. Making a comment about Nancy after knowing how much the break-up hurt Steve was just crossing the line and you couldn't believe that you had been stupid enough to trust that Billy wouldn't take any and every opportunity to get back at Steve. You had foolishly just assumed that Billy would put your friendship above his own need to best Steve at

anything and everything.

"Yeah," Steve agreed before he turned away. "It is." You caught the flash of hurt on Steve's face before he walked away, pushing himself through the crowd of teenagers to try to get away from you and Billy.

"What the fuck was that?" You asked as you turned on Billy. "How was that helping at all?"

"I just wanted Harrington to see what an idiot he's been," Billy offered with a shrug of his shoulders. "Now he knows."

"No, you just wanted to try to one up him *again*. I thought you were going to be my friend tonight, Billy. I think you really just wanted to do all of this for the chance to piss Steve off."

Billy grabbed your cup before taking a sip. He shrugged his shoulders again, pointedly not meeting your eyes, before he gave you an insincere smile. "Oh, lighten up, Y/N. You got what you wanted, right? Harrington was jealous and now he knows he screwed up."

"He looked pretty upset," you pointed out. You felt your lips twist into a frown as you looked towards the hallway where Steve had retreated.

"Yeah," Billy agreed with a smug grin. "He did, didn't he?"

You felt your face flush with anger as you considered Billy. "So much for being my friend," you muttered before you followed after Steve, intent on apologizing to him.

"Oh, come on, Y/N!" Billy yelled after you, but you quickly moved away from him when he reached for you.

You ignored Billy calling your name as you attempted to wade through the other teenagers dancing all around you. You weren't really sure where Steve had gone, but you caught a break when you saw him making his way towards the front door.

"Steve! Wait!" You hoped that Steve would hear you and at least give you a moment to explain, but he didn't even slow down. "Shit," you hissed before you pushed past a couple making out right on the edge

of the dance floor.

You were quick to weave through the other people blocking your way to the front door. You were worried that you were too late when you opened the door and didn't immediately spot Steve. It took you a few seconds to find him across the yard and walking towards his car.

"Steve!" You called as you rushed forward. You couldn't help but think that Billy's idea had gone entirely too far. You hated that Steve had looked so crushed, even for just a moment, and you wanted to tell him that Billy was just messing with him and Billy shouldn't have brought up Nancy. You wanted to tell him anything as long as it made him feel better. "Just wait!" You called as you finally managed to catch up to him. "Billy was out of line. He never should have said all of that. He was just being a jackass."

"Why?" Steve snapped as he suddenly came to a halt. He took a deep breath before he finally turned to look at you. "I just..." he huffed out a frustrated breath as he carded his fingers through his hair. "I guess I don't understand, so I just want to know *why*?"

"Why what?" You weren't really expecting Steve to question you. You assumed you would have to apologize and try to get him to calm down. You thought he might refuse to talk to you or tell you he didn't want to finish the project with you. You didn't expect for him to crowd into your space with an intent that would have usually had you so nervous you could barely speak. Now, you were more worried about the fact that Billy might have run Steve off for good than letting yourself get too flustered by Steve standing right in front of you.

"Why are you wasting your time with Billy Hargrove? He's a horrible person and you're always hanging out with him and always giving him all your attention. And he always has this dumb, smug grin on his face every time he's got his arm around you, because he *knows* how much it's going to drive me crazy. He's the worst and you could have anyone you want and you go with Billy Hargrove of all people? You shouldn't be with someone like him, you should be with--" Steve cut himself off, his chest heaving as he finally ended his rant.

"With?" You prompted, thrown off-guard by Steve's words. It almost

sounded like *Steve* wanted to be with you, but that couldn't be right, could it?

"You should be with someone who's going to appreciate you. Someone who's going to treat you right and know just how great you really are. Someone who wants to take you on dates or hold your hand in the hallway. Someone who could listen to you talk for hours and likes the way you get all shy when someone so much as looks at you. Someone who just really, *really* likes you and has been a bit too much of a dumbass about admitting it." It wasn't until you could feel Steve's breath hitting your face that you realized he had been slowly getting closer to you. You couldn't really take the way he was looking at you. It was like he was staring right through you and seeing every single bit of your being. Like he knew your every thought and still wanted to know more.

"So, then who should I be with?" You found yourself asking, your stomach practically flipping when Steve's eyes dipped briefly to look at your lips before meeting your gaze again.

"I think you know," Steve muttered before he pressed a hand to your jaw and angled your head towards his for a kiss.

You weren't really sure if you were still breathing as Steve kissed you. It wasn't earth-shattering or mind-blowing. It was chaste and innocent and everything a first kiss should be. It was simply his lips pressed to yours, but it felt like the best thing in the entire world.

The sound of cheering came from inside the house, startling Steve into hurriedly stepping away from you. He let out a humorless laugh as he brought a hand up to rub at the back of his neck. He glanced over his shoulder, as if fearing you had an audience, before he looked at you again.

"That was stupid," he mumbled before he shook his head. "That was a mistake and it never should've happened."

"What?" You were still trying to wrap your mind around the fact that Steve had kissed you and it felt like everything you had ever dreamed about, but now he was calling it a mistake. "Why would you say that?"

"Because it *was* a mistake. I regret it already," Steve snapped. "I didn't mean to do that. I shouldn't have done that."

"Steve--" you said, not really sure what words were meant to follow, but feeling like there was a growing void between you and Steve. He was pulling away from you and all you wanted to do was reach out and pull him back.

"Just forget it, Y/N," Steve said as he took a few more steps away from you. "Why don't you go back to your boyfriend? I'm sure he's looking for you," Steve muttered before he turned and walked the rest of the way to his car.

You felt helpless as you watched Steve get into his car and drive away. You weren't sure what had gone wrong. Billy had been a jerk and Steve had kissed you. But then Steve ran away like he couldn't get away from you fast enough. He called the kiss a *mistake*. He said he regretted it.

You could feel tears begin to well in your eyes. You had never wanted to be the kind of person who got all broken up over a guy, but here you were standing all alone on Tina's front lawn with a lump in your throat and shaking hands.

All you wanted in that moment was to be home. You wanted to crawl into bed and shut your eyes and try to forget that you had ever agreed to go to a stupid party as Billy's fake date just to get a guy to like you. You should have known it was a mistake.

A *mistake*, you thought to yourself, Steve's words echoing in your mind. Steve didn't want to kiss you. Steve probably just got caught up in the moment. That's all it was. He was probably just mad at Billy and looking for a way to get back at him.

You hastily wiped away the tears tracking down your face and turned towards the house. You didn't want to go back in there. You didn't want to pretend to have fun and you certainly didn't want to act like you weren't mad at Billy.

You caught sight of Tina on the front porch and hurried over towards her. "Tina," you called, grabbing her attention. "Will you tell Billy I

went home?"

Tina nodded her head, shooting you a quick grin. "Sure thing," she agreed.

"Thanks," you muttered before you took off across the lawn. It was freezing and your one drink had done very little to keep you warm, but you didn't want to deal with Billy at the moment. You just wanted to go home and hope that you could miraculously forget that Steve Harrington had broken your heart after the one person who was supposed to have your back had proved untrustworthy.

You were just a few blocks away from Tina's house when a car pulled to a stop beside you.

"Hey, Y/N?"

You glanced over to see Nancy Wheeler considering you from the passenger seat of Jonathan Byers' car.

"Hey, Nancy," you greeted, hoping that it wasn't obvious that you were still crying.

"Why don't you let us give you a ride home? It's freezing," Nancy offered with a sincere smile.

"That's okay," you tried to deflect with a quick shake of your head. "It would just be out of the way and it's late."

Nancy turned to whisper something to Jonathan before she looked at you again. "It's really not a problem."

"Just let us make sure you get home safe," Jonathan cut in, ducking his head to get a better view of you through the passenger side window. "It's really no trouble at all."

You didn't want to have to be around anyone, but you figured that it would get you home a hell of a lot sooner if you let them drive you there than if you had to walk.

"Yeah, okay," you finally agreed. "Thanks," you told them as you crawled into the backseat.

You were glad that Jonathan and Nancy didn't try to pull you into a conversation. They started talking about Jonathan's little brother, Will, and you let yourself tune them out. You were grateful that you only had to speak to give Jonathan directions towards your house.

By the time Jonathan was pulling to a stop in front of your house, you had managed to stop crying. You felt like an idiot as you thanked Jonathan and Nancy once again and then made a hasty retreat towards your house. You hated that they had to take pity on you, but you were so glad that you were finally home after what felt like the longest night.

You couldn't help but think about everything that happened as you changed into your pajamas. Steve had kissed you and then seemed to immediately regret it. But had Billy been right? Steve's rant had been so quick that you could hardly catch all of it, but had Steve been jealous? He had certainly seemed upset to find out that you were dating Billy. If Steve wanted to be with you, then why did he run away? Why did he think kissing you was such a huge mistake?

By the time you were able to finally drop into your bed, you only hoped that the weekend lasted forever, because you sure as hell weren't looking forward to school on Monday.

Notes for the Chapter:

Life has not been kind lately, so I'm sorry this took so long. I had a really hard time with writing this, so I hope y'all like it. Don't hate me! I promise there's at least two more chapters and things work out. ❤️

5. take all my heart break and swallow it down

Notes for the Chapter:

This chapter alludes to the abuse Billy suffers from his father, so if that's something you can't read, then please skip this chapter.

You had just managed to fall asleep when you were jolted awake by the sound of thunder. It took you a few moments to recognize the sound of rain hitting your window before you realized you weren't alone in your room.

You opened your mouth to scream or yell or do *something*, but you were cut off by the person stepping forward.

"Don't freak out," Billy whispered as he took another step closer to your bed.

"How the hell did you get in here?" You glanced quickly to your bedroom window, but it was shut, thankfully keeping out the pouring rain.

Billy rolled his eyes before he moved to sit down on the edge of your bed. "You guys leave your front door unlocked. You should really be more careful. Anyone could just walk in at any time."

"Anyone *did*," you pointed out before you moved to turn on your bedside lamp.

"Wait," Billy blurted, his hand reaching out in an effort to stall you.

"I can barely see," you told him.

"Just...hold on," Billy said with a tone that you didn't quite recognize. Billy almost sounded nervous, but why would he be nervous? He was the one who had fucked up your shot with Steve earlier that night. If anything, he should be apologizing now.

A flash of lightning lit up your room, affording you a quick look at Billy's face. There was something about his expression that had you

immediately reaching out to turn on your bedside lamp despite his protests.

"Billy," you breathed when you finally caught sight of what he had been trying to hide from you. His lip was split and his left eye was nearly swollen shut and bruised. You reached out, not really thinking about what you were doing, but pulled back at his flinch. "What happened? Did you get into a fight with Steve?"

Billy rolled his eyes, his expression carefully closed off. "Don't worry. Your precious Princess Steve is totally fine. I didn't touch him."

"Then...what happened? Who did this to you?" Billy had always seemed so untouchable and just the thought that anyone *had* obviously touched him made you want to track down whoever did it and give them a taste of their own medicine.

Billy shook his head, glancing away from you. "Doesn't matter," Billy muttered. "Nothing anyone can do about it."

"Hey," you whispered, tugging on the sleeve of his jacket until he looked at you. "You can tell me," you promised him. Even if he would never admit it, you knew that you were the closest thing Billy had to a best friend. Whatever had happened to him had shaken him enough that he couldn't even keep up his usual cool and unruffled façade around you.

"I just came here to apologize," Billy tried to deflect. "I was an asshole and I know it. I can't go running off the only person who gives a fuck about me. So, I'm sorry, and that's all."

Billy moved to stand up, but he hissed out a pained breath and held a hand to his side.

"Billy, come on," you coaxed as you urged him to sit back down. "You don't have to tell me. I'm not going to make you. But if you show up at my house in the middle of the night looking like someone ran you over with their car, then you know I'm just going to keep wondering and worrying."

Billy sighed before he started leaning back, gingerly settling onto

your bed until he was staring up at your bedroom ceiling. You took a cue from him and joined him, lying down at his side. You figured if Billy didn't have to look at you, then whatever he was about to admit would be a bit easier for him if he knew you weren't also looking at him.

Billy was silent for long enough that you started to wonder if he had managed to doze off. You figured it would be just like Billy for him to fall asleep instead of having a heart-to-heart with you.

"It was my father," Billy finally confessed, his voice hushed in the nearly silent room.

You had to struggle for a moment to make out the words over the sound of the rain hitting your window, but when they finally registered in your mind, you quickly looked at Billy in surprise. "Billy--"

"So, my old man hits me because he can't stand me. He's always hated me. He thinks I'm a fucking waste and my mom walked out of him, on *us*, and left me all alone with him." You weren't really sure if you were supposed to say anything, but Billy started talking before you could even think of how to respond. "I could never do anything right, you know. Couldn't talk right or act right or dress right. Didn't play ball like he wanted me to and never got the grades he wanted me to. It's my fault, anyways. I shouldn't have talked back. I guess I was askin' for it."

"No," you argued as you finally sat up so you could look at him. "You should tell someone. The cops or Chief Hopper or *someone*. He can't get away with it, Billy."

"I'll be graduating in a few months and then I'm out of there," Billy offered with a shrug of his shoulders. "Then I can get a job and my own place. Maybe I'll even move back to California."

You were already thinking of different things you could do to help Billy. Maybe he could move in with you until you both graduated. Maybe you convinced Billy to go to the cops. Chief Hopper was always a bit scary, but he'd do his best to help Billy. Or maybe--

"Y/N," Billy called as he sat up, cutting off your train of thought. "I'm eighteen. No one is gonna give a shit about me except for you, and well, now you know," he said, gesturing towards you.

You didn't really know how to decipher Billy's expression, but you couldn't help but feel like a piece of the puzzle that made up Billy Hargrove had finally been set in place, offering you a better picture of your best friend. You thought, though, that you would soon be having a discussion with your mom concerning Billy's living arrangements.

"Why are you looking at me like that?" Billy looked like he wasn't sure if he should make a run for it or simply lie back down.

"Oh, just come here," you sighed before you pulled him into a hug.

"Just watch the ribs," Billy groaned, prompting you to loosen your hold on him.

You rested your forehead against his shoulder, forcing yourself to take a few deep breaths, as you tried to figure out how you were going to help Billy. You wanted to offer to let him spend the night. You were sure your mom wouldn't mind. Besides, it was storming outside and from the sound of the insistent knocking on your window, it sounded like the wind had picked up.

"Uh, Y/N, I hate to tell you this, but it looks like there's an idiot at your window."

"What?" You pulled away from Billy and looked towards your window. At first, you couldn't see anything, but lightning soon lit up the darkness outside, affording you a view of a drenched Steve Harrington at your bedroom window. "What the fuck," you muttered as you scrambled off your bed and over towards your window.

You opened up the window, standing back when Steve practically threw himself into your room. He was dripping water all over your floor and you turned to grab your bathrobe off the back of your desk chair.

"Here," you told him as you handed it over to him.

"T-thanks," he got out, shivering as he started trying to dry himself with your bathrobe.

"Steve, what the hell are you doing here? You're going to end up with pneumonia or something," you berated him, moving to hastily close your bedroom window when you realized that rain was making it into your room and soaking your curtains.

"I just wanted to..." he trailed off when he noticed Billy sitting on your bed. His expression fell, his face closing off, before he took a step back towards your window. "I didn't realize he'd be here."

Billy quirked an eyebrow at Steve, unimpressed. "So, what? You just thought you'd show up at my girlfriend's bedroom window in the middle of the night, hoping I wouldn't be here?"

For a moment, with everything else going on, you had forgotten about the fake relationship between you and Billy. You had forgotten about Billy rubbing your relationship in Steve's face and Steve getting so upset that he kissed you. But then he ruined the moment by saying it was all a mistake and leaving you.

"Right," Steve muttered, his eyes falling to the floor. "I'll just go," he said before he turned back to your window.

"Oh, for fuck's sake, Harrington," Billy sighed as he stood up. "I really don't know why Y/N has fallen for someone who is such an idiot."

"What?" Steve asked, his brows furrowing in confusion.

"It was a *ruse*, Harrington," Billy stressed, gesturing between himself and you. "We were never really together. It was all to make you jealous and I think we can see that it worked out just how it was supposed to. So, to make this easier on the both of you, Harrington has the hots for you," Billy said as he pointed to you. "And Y/N has the hots for Princess Steve. Now you can both stop being so fuckin' stupid and just bang or whatever," he said before he moved towards your bedroom door.

"Billy," you called. "Why don't you spend the night? We have a guest room," you offered, hating the idea of him going home to a father

who would only hurt him again.

Billy glanced from Steve back to you before he waggled his eyebrows. "Maybe another time," he drawled, shooting you a wink.

"Well, just wait," you told him before you moved to pull him into another hug. "Come back tomorrow," you whispered in his ear. "We'll figure something out."

You felt Billy stiffen in your arms before he slowly relaxed. "Sure thing," he murmured before he pulled away and turned towards your bedroom door.

"Wait, aren't you going out the window?" Steve asked, gesturing towards your bedroom window.

"Front door," Billy answered with a shake of his head. "You know they just leave it unlocked?"

"What? Anyone could just walk in at any time," Steve pointed out as he looked at you.

"Anyone *did*," you insisted as you gestured towards Billy. "Just...lock it on your way out?"

"Sure thing," Billy repeated, reaching out to pat you on the shoulder. He leveled Steve with a serious look, narrowing his eyes at him. "If you hurt her, Harrington, I'll hurt *you*."

"Wouldn't dream of it," Steve said, sounding almost adorably sincere.

"Ugh, seriously?" You groaned as you started ushering Billy out of your room. "Good night, Billy."

"Yeah, yeah, yeah," Billy sighed as he let you push him out of the room. "See you tomorrow, Y/N," he promised before he closed your bedroom door behind him.

You took a deep breath before you turned and looked at Steve. He was shifting on his feet, as if he wasn't sure what he was really supposed to do now. You had always thought that if you got Steve Harrington alone in your bedroom in the middle of the night, that

you would be doing something completely different than standing on opposite sides of your room, considering each other. Steve seemed so nervous and it was so unlike 'King Steve,' that you couldn't help but let out a little laugh.

"What? What is it?"

You shook your head as you moved to sit on the edge of your bed. "I'm just so used to you not being like *this*," you said as you gestured to where he was still shifting nervously on his feet.

Steve sighed before he brushed his fingers through his hair, wincing when he accidentally shook out some more water onto your floor. "Shit, sorry," he sighed before he draped your bathrobe over your desk chair and then sat down on it, mindful to not soak your chair. "Look, the last girl I really liked, the last one I bothered to visit in her bedroom at night? That girl was Nancy. And I think you've heard around school how well that ended. So, yeah, I'm a little nervous. I don't want to screw this up."

You usually would have been overjoyed to know that Steve was admitting some type of feelings for you, but you couldn't help but remember how he had treated you earlier. "Then what was that earlier? You kissed me and then ran away," you pointed out as you sat forward, fixing him with an unimpressed look. "You said it was all a mistake, like you did it on accident. Like it meant nothing to you."

"No, *no*," Steve stressed as he got off your desk chair. He moved to kneel in front of you, hesitating for a moment before he reached out and grabbed your hand. "I've wanted to do that for a while. You're just...if I kissed you, I wanted to do it when you weren't dating someone else. When you were single. I didn't want to make my move when you were attached to someone else. I couldn't do that, even to Billy Hargrove of all people, because I know how that feels."

You thought back to the rumors floating around school just after Nancy and Steve broke up. Jonathan and Nancy had ended up together not long after and you couldn't help but wonder if Nancy and Steve had truly been broken up before Jonathan and Nancy fell together.

"I understand why you did it," you finally conceded, squeezing his hand. "But you hurt me, Steve. I can't just forget that so easily."

Steve leaned forward, moving a bit more into your space. "Then let me make it up to you. What are you doing later?"

You glanced quickly at your bed before looking back at him. "Uh, sleeping? It is pretty late."

"Right, I meant this weekend," Steve amended with a wince. "I, uh, when I gave you that ride home the other day, I really wanted to ask you to a movie, but I kind of wussed out."

You remembered him mentioning movies that were supposed to be coming out soon, but you never would have thought that was what he had been leading up to.

"I don't have anything going on," you told him, feeling a grin tug at the corners of your lips at the relieved look on Steve's face.

"Good," he muttered as he leaned in even closer. "Then, Y/N, I'd love to take you out for a movie." He brushed his lips quickly against yours. "Dinner," he added before kissing you again. "And I'll hold your hand." Another kiss. "Bring you flowers." Another kiss. "And walk you up to your front door at the end of the night." He smiled at you this time, his expression hopeful, before he brought his hands up to frame your face, drawing you in for a longer, deeper kiss.

You felt like you could hardly breathe. You had given up all hope of ever thinking that you could have anything with Steve after he had kissed you and left you. Just earlier that night you had felt so alone, betrayed by your best friend and practically rejected by the guy you really liked. Now, you felt closer than ever to Billy and Steve was right here, his lips pressed to yours, and his body pressing even closer to you.

Steve's shirt was still damp when it pressed into your legs. You shivered, prompting Steve to pull away from you.

"It's late," he mumbled, shooting you an apologetic look. "I just couldn't go to sleep knowing I had left things like that between us. I

had to let you know that I was sorry for walking away like that. It wasn't right," he sighed before he moved in for another kiss.

You lost track of time with Steve pressing against you. You didn't even really notice when you ended up on your back, Steve hovering over you as you let yourself be bold and deepen the kiss. By the time Steve pulled away, you realized your hands had crept up under his shirt and his hand had been running slowly up your side.

"I should go," he told you when you made an unhappy noise. "I don't want to rush this."

"Right," you muttered, feeling yourself flush when you realized just how far you had been willing to go with Steve. "At least it's not raining anymore," you pointed out, nodding towards the window. You had the urge to ask Steve to stay, but you knew that it wouldn't be a good idea to rush whatever was forming between the two of you.

You had wanted Steve Harrington for over half of your life. You could wait a little while longer for him.

"See you this weekend," Steve promised, dropping a kiss to the crown of your head, before he walked over to your window. You were going to offer to let him use the front door, but he was already climbing through your window. He offered you a wave before he dropped down out of sight.

You moved to your window and watched Steve cross your front yard. He turned and looked up at your window as he got to his car. You weren't sure if he could see you, but from the smile on his face, you figured it was a fair bet that he had spotted you watching him.

You watched him get into his car and drive away before you moved back over towards your bed. The foot of your bed was still damp from Steve's wet clothes, but you didn't even care.

You went to sleep only moments later with a smile on your face, thinking about your date with Steve Harrington that weekend and the feeling of his lips pressed close to yours. As you rolled over and closed your eyes, you resolved to fix things for Billy as well. You

were sure if you asked your mom, she wouldn't mind letting him take up the guest room until he graduated.

You knew Billy would probably hate the idea of accepting help, but you had a feeling you were the only one who was willing to actually offer it to Billy Hargrove. It was something you weren't going to take lightly and if you had it your way, then soon enough, Billy wouldn't even have to see his father at all if he didn't want to.

As you finally drifted off to sleep, you couldn't help but think that maybe this Valentine's Day wasn't so bad after all.

Notes for the Chapter:

I'm so sorry this took me two months. I know there's at least one chapter left, but depending on how the next chapter goes, there might be an epilogue. We'll see. And then I'll be working on the sequel. Thank you to anyone who shows this love. It really means a lot. ❤️

I also usually do two edits, but I'm really tired (it's 3:30 am), so I'm just leaving it at one edit since it's a shorter chapter.

6. There's No Need to Hide

Notes for the Chapter:

Thank you so much to everyone who has given this fic a chance. It wouldn't have happened with your support.

When you woke up the next morning, it took you a few moments to remember everything that happened the previous night. From pretending to be Billy's girlfriend, to fighting with Steve, to fighting with Billy, to finding out about Billy's situation with his father, and then Steve showing up and practically sweeping you off your feet. None of it seemed real, but you held onto the hope that Steve promising to take you out on a date wasn't just a wishful dream.

When you got downstairs, you drew short at the sight of Billy sleeping on the living room couch. You didn't know why he was still there, but you assumed he decided not to go home the night before after all. You were debating whether to let him sleep or wake him up before your mom found him, when you were startled by someone putting their hand on your shoulder.

You glanced back to see your mom standing behind you, a concerned look on her face as she watched Billy sleep. "Come on," she whispered, before she ushered you into the kitchen.

"Mom--" you started, wondering if you were in trouble.

"I caught him trying to sneak out the front door last night," your mom interrupted, shaking her head with a rueful grin as she moved over towards the coffee pot.

You felt yourself relax just the tiniest bit. If she was making coffee, then she wasn't pissed, but it meant she did want to talk. "About that--" you tried to say, but you were cut off by your mom again.

"I suggested he spend the night on the couch, since it was pouring out last night. Not to mention, I could tell the poor boy had been through something," she added, gesturing towards her face. "He wouldn't tell

me who did it to him, but I've got a good feeling I know."

Your mom turned and set a cup of coffee in front of you before working on fixing one for herself.

"If you know," you found yourself saying, hoping that you weren't reading her wrong. "Then maybe we can do something."

Your mom leaned against the kitchen counter and considered you for a moment, her cup of coffee held up to her mouth. She quirked an eyebrow at you before taking a careful sip. "Like what?"

"Maybe," you started, avoiding the urge to mess with the tablecloth in an effort to distract yourself, "maybe he could come live with us? Just until senior year is over and then I'm sure we can figure something out then, but mom--" you cut yourself off, quickly looking over your shoulder to make sure Billy hadn't joined the two of you in the kitchen. "We can't leave him there in that house. We can't make him go back and stay there when we both know what'll happen to him."

Your mom watched you for a few moments before she sighed. She set her cup of coffee down on the counter and fixed you with a look that you knew meant she was about to cave. "Not when I know what he's going back to," your mom agreed. "If he's okay with it, then I'm okay with it. But," she started, pointing a finger at you. "No funny business, alright? He can take the guest room until you two graduate high school, and then if he still needs a place to stay, well," she shrugged her shoulders. "I'm not exactly going to kick him out before he's got his life figured out."

You set down your cup of coffee and got out of your seat. You rounded the table, moving to pull your mom into a hug. You knew that you had well and truly lucked out in the mom department. The dad department? That was a whole other story, but your mom was one of the best. "Thank you," you told her, feeling incredibly grateful that she was willing to take a chance on Billy. You knew most people saw the sports car and bad attitude and leather jacket paired with tight jeans and wrote Billy off as nothing more than a bad boy, but you knew there was so much more to him. You knew, without a doubt, that your mom would be able to see that too.

"If you'll vouch for him, then I'm willing to give him a chance," your mom told you before she kissed the side of your head. "Now, go wake him up and tell him the news. I'll get started on breakfast."

You couldn't resist giving your mom one last hug before you went to wake Billy. You always assumed Billy would be difficult to wake up, but you had barely whispered his name when you saw his eyes snap open. He looked confused for a moment, squinting against the sunlight that had made it passed the living room curtains, before he glanced over at you. You saw the moment when events clicked into place in his head.

"Shit," he muttered before he sat up. "Your mom kickin' me out now that it's morning?"

"No," you snorted as you moved to sit beside him. "Actually, she's doing the opposite."

Billy furrowed his brow, frowning at you as he attempted to understand, but you could tell he wasn't fully awake yet.

"We want you to move in with us," you explained, reaching out to grab his hand when he looked like he was immediately going to protest. "At least until we graduate," you offered, knowing that Billy was stubborn and hard-headed and unlikely to willingly accept help. "And then if you want to move out, we're not gonna stop you. But Billy, do you really want to stay in that house with *him*?"

Billy grimaced before he shook his head. "Not really," he muttered. "But your mom can't possibly be on board," he started, gesturing towards himself. "She doesn't even know me."

"Actually," your mom interrupted, causing you and Billy to startle. "I am on board. My daughter thinks you're worth it, so I think you're worth it."

Billy snorted before he moved to stand. "Yeah, well she also has a thing for Harrington, so she's clearly got no taste."

You rolled your eyes and barely resisted the urge to tell him to shut up. "If you don't want to, then we're not going to make it a big deal."

But we'd both like for you to stay here."

Billy met your eyes, seemingly looking for any hint that you were lying and being dishonest. You saw it the moment he finally seemed to accept that you were trying to help him. His shoulders slumped and he unclenched his jaw. "Just suppose I do want to move in..." he trailed off, glancing at your mom. "What kind of rules does my stay come with?"

Your mom offered Billy a smile before she nodded towards the kitchen. "How about we discuss that over breakfast?"

Billy glanced at you, his eyes wide in bewilderment. "I'm not--"

"Breakfast," your mom stressed. "You're not leaving until you've put something in that stomach, since I'm sure you were doing nothing but drinking last night. You're going to make yourself sick runnin' around on an empty stomach, and I suspect you're going to have a full day ahead of you."

"Just go with it," you whispered to Billy. "She's not going to let it go."

"Yeah," Billy drawled, shooting your mom an uncertain look. "I guess I could eat."

Once your mom was satisfied that you and Billy had eaten enough, she shooed you both out of the house to go to Billy's so he could start packing up his things. She had taken the time while Billy was eating the toast, eggs, and bacon she made to lay down her ground rules.

Billy seemed mystified by the idea that he was actually going to be expected to stick to a curfew and keep up with his grades. Your mom had made sure that he knew he was welcome to treat her house like his own home, but he was expected to respect her rules. Billy had readily agreed, but you knew that it was going to take him a while to adjust to the idea that he had an adult out there who actually cared enough to make sure he was eating enough and taking care of himself.

"You don't actually have to help me pack," Billy told you as he drove you back to his house. "Don't want you pawin' through my boxers and

getting any ideas. Although..." he said, smirking at you.

"Oh, shut up," you groaned, tipping your head back against the headrest. "You wish," you muttered.

You smiled at the sound of Billy laughing. He sounded a little lighter, freer, than he usually did. You knew he was looking forward to getting away from his dad, and you couldn't help but wonder if your mom had sent you along with Billy just to make sure Billy's father didn't start anything with him.

You noticed Billy's grip on the steering wheel tighten the closer you got to his house. When he pulled up to the curb, he cursed softly, scowling at a car in the driveway.

"That your dad's?"

"Yeah," Billy muttered. He moved to get out of the car, his shoulders tense as he walked up the driveway.

You followed after him, noticing Max sitting on the front steps, her skateboard on her lap as she frowned down at one of the wheels.

Billy glanced at you before nodding towards Max. "Stay out here," he said.

"But--"

"Just, *please*," Billy insisted, shooting you a pleading look. "It'll be easier if you just stay out here."

You frowned at him, not wanting to leave him alone with his father. But you knew that if you fought Billy on this, then it would just make him even more upset. "I'll be out here if you need me," you finally conceded, reaching out to briefly squeeze his shoulder.

Billy nodded before passing Max, ignoring her half-hearted 'hey.'

You hesitated for a moment before moving to sit beside Max. "Broken wheel?"

"It keeps wobbling," she answered, barely bothering to glance at you.

"Going on a date with Billy?"

You snorted, finally earning a surprised look from Max. "I'm not dating Billy. We're just friends."

Max shook her head before focusing back on her skateboard. "Yeah, that's what *you* think."

"I'm not seeing Billy," you refuted again. "Actually, Steve Harrington and I are supposed to be going on a date later."

"Steve?" Max asked, quirked an eyebrow at you. "How can you like Steve *and* be Billy's friend? That can't possibly work."

You shrugged your shoulders. "Stranger things have happened."

Max's lips tilted up in a brief smile before she rolled her eyes. "You have no idea."

You wondered what she meant by that, but before you could ask, you heard the sound of yelling. You glanced over your shoulder, wondering if you should go inside and try to be there for Billy, but before you could stand, he was storming out the front door. He had a backpack slung over one shoulder and a duffel bag clutched in his hand.

"Let's go," he told you. He took a few steps away from the house before he sighed and turned to look at Max. "Hey," he called, gaining her attention.

Max glanced up from her skateboard, frowning warily at Billy. "What?"

"If you ever need help," he trailed off, shooting a subtle glance at where his father was staring at him from the living room window. "You come find me."

Max's mouth dropped open for a moment, visibly surprised by Billy's words. "Uh...sure," she agreed, shooting a quick glance over her shoulder at her stepfather. "I'll keep that in mind."

Billy nodded his head before he ushered you back towards his car.

"Is she going to be safe here?" You couldn't help but wonder as you glanced back at Max.

"My father won't go near her," Billy assured you. "But if I'm wrong, I want her to know there are people willing to help her. I doubt her mother will do a damn thing," he grumbled before he threw his stuff into the back of his car. "Come on," he said, gesturing for you to get into the passenger seat.

By the time you got back to your house, Billy seemed to be in a better mood. He was tapping his fingers on the steering wheel, drumming along to the song on the radio. "So, hey," Billy said as he pulled into the driveway. "I know I can be kind of an ass sometimes," he started.

"Only sometimes?" You couldn't help but ask, laughing when he reached out to ruffle your hair in retaliation.

"Yeah, yeah," he grumbled. "I'm trying to say thanks, alright? Thanks for giving a shit about me. Thanks for being there."

"I could say the same to you, you know? I wouldn't have had a chance with Steve if it wasn't for you."

"Yeah, well," Billy started before his attention was caught by something just over your shoulder. He snorted and shook his head. "Speaking of Harrington..." he said before he nodded, silently prompting you to follow his gaze.

You looked over your shoulder to see Steve getting out of his car. He rounded the front, a bouquet of flowers in his hand. He seemed to be talking to himself as he walked up towards your front door.

You moved to get out of the car, wanting to let Steve know you weren't in the house, but your movement was cut off by Billy honking the horn. You heard Billy chuckle as Steve jumped, nearly dropping the flowers as he whipped around to look at the pair of you sitting in Billy's car.

"Oh, it's too easy," you heard Billy say before he got out of his car. "Nice watching out, Harrington!" Billy ducked to look at you still in the passenger seat. "I'm going inside to get my shit in order. You kids

play nice, alright?" He moved to grab his bags before he left you behind in the car.

You couldn't help but huff out a laugh as you finally scrambled out of the car, meeting Steve on your front lawn.

"So, what? Is he living here now?"

"Yeah," you answered, shrugging your shoulders. "He needed a new place to stay and my mom offered." You noticed Steve grimace. "Is that going to be a problem?"

Steve seemed to think it over for a moment before he shook his head. "Nah," he answered. "Maybe it'll make him less of a dick."

You laughed, sharing a grin with Steve. "So, uh," you glanced down at the flowers he was still clutching in his hand. "Are those for me?"

"What?" Steve followed your gaze before seemingly remembering the bouquet. "Oh! Yeah," Steve said, holding out the flowers for you. "I was coming by to pick you up for our date. Are you ready to go? Or am I too early?"

"I'm ready," you rushed to assure him, taking the flowers from him. "What did you have in mind?"

"Movie, dinner, kissing, holding hands? Everything I mentioned last night." You saw Steve's cheeks flush and you wondered if he was also thinking about the two of you making a date while you were making out on your bed.

"I'm in," you agreed. "Just let me change into something else and put these in some water," you told him, gesturing for him to follow you into your house. "What movie are we going to see?"

"Well, that new Molly Ringwald one just came out, and it looked interesting. You up for seeing *The Breakfast Club*?"

"I've been wanting to see that one," you said, smiling at him. "It sounds perfect."

You rushed through changing your clothes when you realized that

you would have to leave Billy and Steve downstairs with your mom. You hoped she wasn't embarrassing you, but you realized if anyone was going to try to embarrass you, it would be Billy. He was turning out to be like the brother you never knew you wanted and you secretly loved it.

By the time you got downstairs, you were glad to see that your mom seemed to be asking Steve about school. You didn't think Steve looked horribly uncomfortable, but by the smirk on Billy's face, you could guess he was getting ready to pick at Steve.

"Alright, well, we should get going if we're going to make it to the movie on time," you interrupted, catching Steve's relieved glance in your direction.

"And you'll have her home by eleven," your mom insisted, staring down Steve.

"Yeah, Harrington. No funny business," Billy remarked, winking at you.

You rolled your eyes before you reached out to grab Steve's hand, wanting to get him as far away from your mom and Billy as you possibly could before either one of them said something that would have you dying of shame.

Somehow, you hadn't had time to think about the fact that you were about to go on a date with Steve Harrington. You felt nervous as you sat in Steve's passenger seat. You weren't really sure what to do or think or say, but when Steve reached out and grabbed your hand, you realized it didn't matter. You weren't going to worry or stress or doubt yourself. You were going to enjoy your date with Steve.

He took you out to dinner at Benny's first. You each got a burger and fries and decided to split a milkshake. You both talked about what you wanted to do after high school. Steve was worried about not getting into college, but you assured him that he had nothing to worry about. You told him about your plans to spend the summer at your dad's house even though you weren't the biggest fan of your dad.

You also talked about your favorite movies and what you wanted to do over Spring Break. Steve had just mentioned that you were welcome to come over and use his pool when he got ketchup on his shirt. You laughed at his frown, realizing you found his pout cute, and he retaliated by dabbing a bit of ketchup on your nose with the end of his fry.

You realized that you were the happiest you had been in a long time as you listened to Steve tell you all about his friend Dustin. You were getting to see a side of Steve you didn't know existed and it made you like him all the more.

You worried that things might be awkward when you got to the theater and had to sit in the dark with Steve without talking to each other. What if the movie turned out to be boring? What if Steve had too much time to think about your date and realized he was having a horrible time? It didn't take you long to realize that you shouldn't have worried, since you both ended up equally drawn into the movie. You realized that the teenagers on screen were dealing with some of the same insecurities and thoughts that plagued you, and even though it was a little bit sad, it was still a really compelling story.

By the time the teenagers were all dancing and bonding, you realized that Steve had been holding your hand for most of the movie. You glanced over to see his attention on the screen, but when he sensed you were watching him, he turned to look at you.

"Hey," he whispered. "Good movie, right?"

"Yeah," you agreed, offering him a quick grin. You wondered if you should lean in for a kiss, but you chickened out. Instead, you turned your attention back to the screen, settling in closer to Steve's side. Steve let go of your hand, and you worried for a moment that he wanted some space, but he simply wrapped his arm around your shoulders, pulling you close.

You couldn't help but smile as you enjoyed the rest of the movie from the comfort of Steve's side. You loved hearing him laugh or mutter his own commentary of the movie. He seemed to realize you were listening halfway through and ducked down, whispering his thoughts to you. You thought it might have just been an excuse to tuck you in

even closer to his side, but you enjoyed it all the same.

By the time Steve was pulling up to your house twenty minutes before your curfew, you realized that he had managed to make you fall for him even more. He was no longer King Steve, resident douchebag and most popular student at Hawkins High. He had shown you that he was just Steve Harrington. He was adorable and funny and charming and had the dorkiest laugh you had ever heard. It was unrestrained and loud and you loved it as much as you were starting to realize you loved him.

Steve stopped you from getting out of the car with a hand on your arm. "Hold on," he said, moving to open his door. You wondered why he was making you wait, but when he quickly rounded the car and opened your door for you, you understood.

"What a gentleman," you said, sharing a smile with Steve.

"Well, I want to make a good impression," Steve told you, letting you lead him up towards your front door. "Is it working?"

You pretended to think about your answer as you came to a stop in front of your house. "I'll let you know on our next date."

Steve's eyes lit up for a moment, a relieved smile blooming across his face. "You know, I did already have an idea about where I wanted to take you."

"Oh, yeah? Care to share it with me?"

"Well," Steve started, swaying closer to you. "Thought we might hit up the arcade. Go out for ice cream after or maybe some pizza."

"Video games?" You couldn't help but wonder. You couldn't remember Steve ever showing an interest in video games before, but you were starting to think that there was always going to be something new to discover about Steve. He wasn't what everyone seemed to assume about him, and you loved that he was constantly defying everyone's expectations, including your own.

"It's totally lame, isn't it?" Steve groaned before he shook his head. "That's the last time I let Henderson give me dating advice," he

muttered.

"Steve, it's perfect," you assured him. "I'll be happy as long as I get to spend more time with you."

"Yeah?" Steve's expression brightened. He ducked his head, his eyes meeting yours. "You know, we've gone to dinner, seen a movie, and held hands. I even brought you flowers. There's only one thing left to do now."

"Right," you agreed, realizing what Steve was hinting at with his words.

"So," Steve started, bringing his hand up, his fingers resting under your chin and tilting your face up towards his. "Can I kiss you?"

"Please," you said, before taking matters into your own hands and pressing your lips to Steve's.

Steve wrapped his arms around your waist, reeling you in until you were pressed together. You couldn't resist running your fingers through his hair, tugging on the ends and delighting in the moan you earned from Steve.

Steve had just slipped his hand under your shirt when you were startled out of the kiss by the porch light turning on and off over and over.

"Wrap it up, Harrington!" You heard Billy call from inside the house. "It's a first date, not your honeymoon!"

You couldn't help but laugh, tipping your forehead against Steve's as you flipped Billy off over your shoulder. "That's going to get old," you sighed.

"Any chance he'll be go away?"

Billy continued to flip the porch light on and off, answering Steve's question.

"To be fair," you started as you pulled away from Steve. "We probably wouldn't be together if it wasn't for him. He took a weird interest in

my love life, no matter how many times I asked him to drop it."

"Well, I guess Hargrove was bound to do something right for once," he sighed before pressing a quick kiss to your cheek. "Alright, alright," Steve called, taking a step away from you. "You can stop now, Billy. I'm going." Steve rolled his eyes, offering you a reassuring grin. "I'll call you, okay?"

"Looking forward to it," you promised, not able to keep the smile off your face as you watched Steve take a few steps away from you. He seemed as if he was struggling to take his eyes off of you, but after he almost tripped over a sprinkler head, he conceded and turned around to walk towards his car.

You heard the front door open behind you before Billy stepped out onto the porch. "Any complaints?" Billy asked, knocking his shoulder into yours.

"It was perfect," you answered, raising your hand in a wave as Steve got into his car. *"He was perfect."*

Billy snorted before he threw an arm around your shoulders, steering you into the house. "I doubt that, but I guess there's no accounting for taste. Especially yours."

Notes for the Chapter:

This is the final chapter, but there will be a sequel! I have a couple of other fics to work on, but I will be planning out the sequel soon. In the meantime, here's a snippet of dialogue and a hint at the summary.

"It's not your fault," Steve insisted, following after you.

"It is," you stressed as you turned towards Steve. "I wasn't here! Billy needed me and I wasn't here and now he's dead. How is that not my fault?"

You leave Hawkins for the summer and come back to

a total shitshow. The new mall burned down, Chief Hopper and Billy among the casualties, and everyone, including Steve, seems to be hiding something from you. To make matters worse, you keep hearing and seeing Billy, but that can't be possible. Billy's dead...isn't he?